

**Date:** April 22, 2015  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Neil McFarlane *Neil McFarlane*

**Subject:** RESOLUTION 15-04-17 OF THE TRI-COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT OF OREGON (TRIMET) ENDORSING FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF POWELL-DIVISION TRANSIT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT INCLUDING LETTER TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) SEEKING ENTRY INTO FTA PROJECT DEVELOPMENT UNDER SMALL STARTS

**1. Purpose of Item**

The purpose of this item is to request the Board of Directors (“Board”) to direct the General Manager to continue development of planning, design, and project implementation of the Powell-Division Transit and Development Project, including submitting a letter to the Federal Transit Administration (“FTA”) seeking entry into FTA Project Development in the Small Starts program for transit projects.

**2. Type of Agenda Item**

- Initial Contract
- Contract Modification
- Other: Endorsing further development of Powell-Division Transit and Development Project including letter to FTA seeking entry into FTA Project Development under Small Starts

**3. Reason for Board Action**

Approval of this Resolution to continue developing the Powell-Division Transit and Development Project and to submit a request to FTA demonstrates to FTA that the project is supported at the agency’s highest (Board) level.

**4. Type of Action:**

- Resolution
- Ordinance 1<sup>st</sup> Reading
- Ordinance 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading
- Other

**5. Background**

The Powell-Division Transit and Development Project, in which TriMet would design, build, operate and maintain a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in the Powell-Division Corridor, is broadly supported by riders, neighborhoods, businesses and business associations, institutions, and jurisdictions in the Powell-Division corridor. The transit corridor was

identified in the regional High Capacity Transit (HCT) plan as a high priority corridor and currently has both high ridership and significant plans for additional development of housing, employment, and education.

### **Public Support & Preferred Alternative**

TriMet has worked with Metro as the lead, and Cities of Gresham and Portland, ODOT, Multnomah County and other partners to develop conceptual alignments and understanding of mode choice in the corridor. A Steering Committee representing the residents, businesses, service providers, and others in the corridor have unanimously endorsed a BRT project that runs between Gresham and downtown Portland, serving Powell Blvd on the western end and Division St on the Eastern end with transition options remaining as shown in Attachment 1 to this Board memo.

TriMet has used many components of BRT in various places throughout the region (e.g., exclusive bus lanes in downtown Portland, queue jumps at intersections through the region, signal priority in Portland and Gresham), but has not yet developed a comprehensive BRT project. This corridor, with its high ridership, significant plans for development of housing and employment in the corridor, key destinations such as Mt Hood Community College, Portland Community College, Oregon Health Sciences University, South Waterfront, downtown Portland, Gresham Vista employment development site and housing and business areas along the corridor, represents a good opportunity for TriMet to develop a BRT project that provides faster, more reliable, and higher capacity service for existing and future riders in the corridor. It is expected to strengthen the ladders of opportunity in the corridor, connecting affordable housing with job and educational opportunities.

### **Funding Opportunities**

The FTA provides competitive funding opportunities for such projects through the Small Starts process. TriMet and the City of Portland have previously secured \$75 million toward the Portland Streetcar Loop Project through the Small Starts process. In addition, through the New Starts process, which is similar to Small Starts but a more extensive process for higher-cost projects, TriMet has secured over \$2.1 billion in competitive funding which helped pay for the Blue, Yellow, Green, and Orange Line MAX projects.

### **Phase One**

The first phase of FTA's competitive process is entry into Project Development. To achieve this, TriMet must send a letter with basic information about the project to the FTA sufficient for FTA to understand the potential eligibility of the project for Small Starts funding. The project appears ready for this step because:

- The Steering Committee's definition of the project is sufficient for FTA to understand potential scope and funding parameters
- TriMet's experience with FTA capital projects funding provides a better understanding of project and staff readiness that FTA might otherwise have with a new applicant
- The project partners expect to have met the required funding for Project Development activities (but not the overall project) before entry into Project Development within the next few months.
- Once in FTA Project Development, any project-eligible expenses can be counted as match toward a future federal grant under Small Starts.

FTA's approval to enter the Project Development phase will begin a two-year process to:

- Adopt a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) that defines the mode, alignment, terminus, and general scope of the project
- Have the LPA formally adopted into the Regional Transportation Plan
- Complete any analysis and reporting of environmental benefits and impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Complete sufficient design and cost estimation as well as finance plans to pursue a Grant Agreement with FTA for construction of the project

At the completion of the Project Development phase, TriMet would proceed to negotiate a Project Construction Grant Agreement with FTA. Once obtained, this would facilitate final design and construction of the project.

**6. Procurement Process**

No procurement process is directly involved as this is the beginning of a process with FTA. Procurement decisions for planning, design, engineering, and construction would all be made separately through processes meeting TriMet, state, and federal requirements.

**7. Diversity (if needed, case by case to include DBE, MBE, Workforce Diversification)**

Opportunities for diversity in contracted services will be sought during and beyond FTA Project Development.

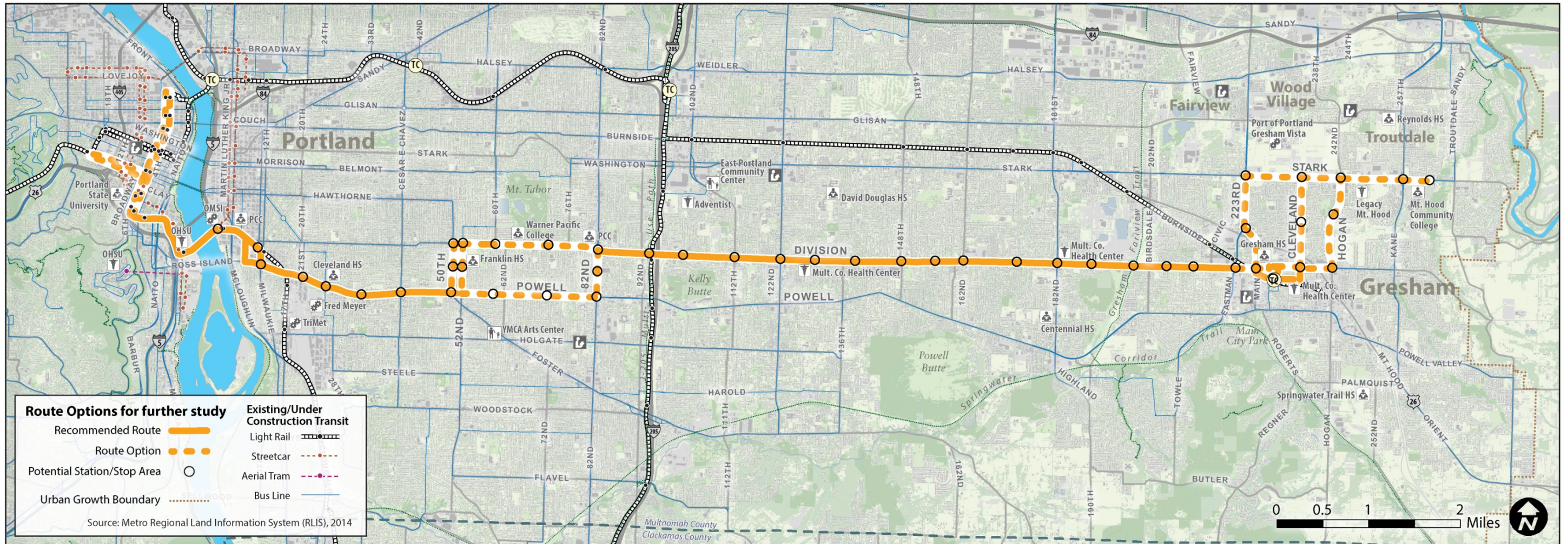
**8. Financial/Budget Impact**

The Approved Budget for FY16 includes TriMet's share of FTA Project Development funding for this project.

**9. Impact if Not Approved**

If the Board chose not to approve this Resolution, TriMet would not pursue FTA Project Development status. This would either halt the project entirely or substantially reduce the opportunity to use local financial resources to leverage federal funding.

**Resolution 15-04-17 Board Memo  
Attachment 1  
Steering Committee-Adopted Alignment for BRT Project**



**RESOLUTION 15-04-17**

**RESOLUTION OF THE TRI-COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT OF OREGON (TRIMET) ENDORSING FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF POWELL-DIVISION TRANSIT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT INCLUDING LETTER TO THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) SEEKING ENTRY INTO FTA PROJECT DEVELOPMENT UNDER SMALL STARTS**

**WHEREAS**, the Powell-Division Transit and Development Project, in which TriMet would design, build, operate and maintain a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in the Powell-Division Corridor, is broadly supported by riders, neighborhoods, businesses and business associations, institutions, and jurisdictions in the Powell-Division corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, the Powell-Division corridor was identified in the regional High Capacity Transit (HCT) plan as a high priority corridor and currently high ridership with significant plans for more development of housing, employment, and education; and

**WHEREAS**, the corridor currently has high ridership with significant plans for more development of housing, employment, and education; and

**WHEREAS**, the Powell-Division Steering Committee included residents, transit riders, community organization leaders, business representatives, elected officials and agency directors with a charge to work together to understand public input and technical analysis so that the committee could make good decisions that have community support; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of the project is to improve mobility in the corridor by providing enhanced bus service, improvements for active transportation/access to transit, and exploring opportunities for land use or development improvements to take advantage of the enhanced transit service and to increase viability and desirability of transit as a mobility option in the corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, this corridor has key destinations such as Mt Hood Community College, Portland Community College, Oregon Health Sciences University, South Waterfront, downtown Portland, Gresham Vista employment development site and housing and business areas along the corridor, as well as the opportunity provided by the Tilikum Crossing Bridge; and

**WHEREAS**, the project represents a good opportunity for TriMet to pursue a BRT project that provides faster, more reliable, and higher capacity service for existing and future riders in the corridor and it is expected to strengthen the ladders of opportunity in the corridor, connecting affordable housing with job and educational opportunities; and

**WHEREAS**, TriMet shares the objective with other project partners and the public to provide transit improvements to improve access while also working with other partners for existing and new development to support existing communities and provide for new development that offers opportunity to a spectrum of incomes that represent the city; and

**WHEREAS**, TriMet will work to develop the project in a manner that provides contracting opportunities for current residents and small businesses in the corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, TriMet will have restored service hours to historical highs including providing 15 minutes or better service on all Frequent Service lines, seven days a week and has a stable funding picture for the long-term to be able to continue to operate these services and incrementally grow to meet demand and reliability needs on overloaded trips or those with highly unpredictable arrival times; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Small Starts program offers an opportunity to leverage local funds with additional federal funding toward a project in the corridor; and

**WHEREAS**, the FTA requires a letter from the project sponsor describing the project and providing enough information for the FTA to determine project eligibility and readiness to enter FTA Project Development; and

**WHEREAS**, TriMet and project partners will soon have all the requirements met to submit a letter of intent to enter FTA Project Development; and

**WHEREAS**, substantially more than half of FTA Project Development funding needs will be met by local partners and reallocation of federal flexible funding via JPACT and Metro; and

**WHEREAS**, project partners seek to maximize efficiency of expenditures by entering FTA Project Development because once in FTA Project Development, any project-eligible expenses can be counted as match toward a future federal grant under Small Starts; and

**WHEREAS**, TriMet has been successful in securing over \$2.1 billion in competitive grants that would otherwise not have been available to the District through New Starts and \$75 million in Small Starts with the FTA; and

**WHEREAS**, TriMet has typically sought Board of Directors approval for formal steps in Capital Investment Grant processes which includes Small Starts;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:**

1. That the TriMet Board of Directors hereby endorses further development of the Powell-Division Transit and Development Project including submitting a letter to FTA seeking entry into FTA Project Development for a BRT project under Small Starts.

2. That the General Manager or his designee(s) are authorized to develop and submit any necessary documentation to FTA or other parties to undertake FTA Project Development.

Dated: April 22, 2015

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Presiding Officer

Attest:

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Recording Secretary

Approved as to Legal Sufficiency

  
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Legal Department